

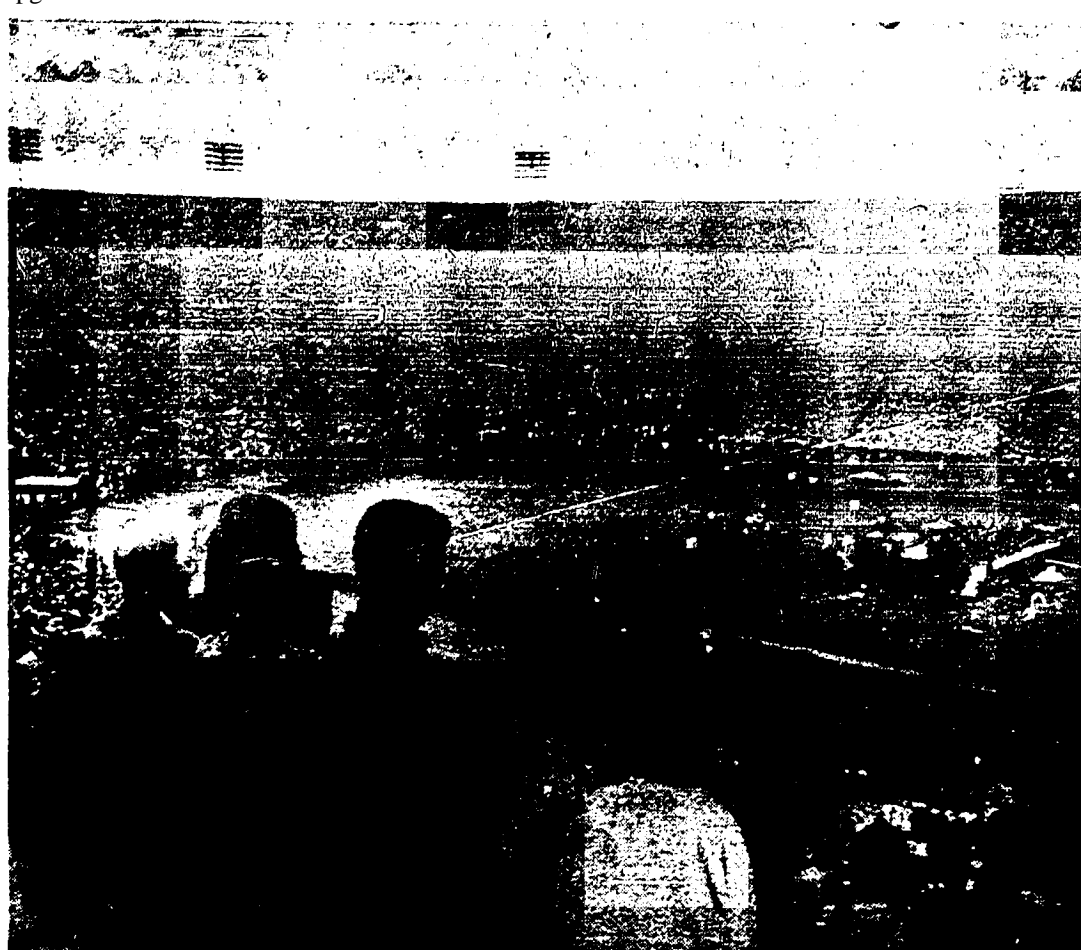
# Graham Launches Coliseum Crusade

DAN THRAPP

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**CRUSADE UNDER WAY**—Evangelist Billy Graham begins his California crusade from a podium erected

in the center of Memorial Coliseum, while crowd estimated at more than 38,000 assembles to listen.

Times photo

# Graham Launches Coliseum Crusade

**38,708 Hear Evangelist Declare U.S. Is at Crossroad of Destiny**

BY DAN THRAPP, Times Religion Editor

Evangelist Billy Graham opened his 25-day Los Angeles crusade Thursday evening before "the largest opening night audience we ever have had in the United States."

He told the 38,708 seated in the west-end portion of Memorial Coliseum that "as a nation and as individuals we are standing at the crossroads of our national destiny."

"America," he said, "is facing a moral emergency and a moral crisis which threatens the very future of the nation."

And Los Angeles, he added, could prove a key to solving this crisis in God's way.

## In Summer Garb

The gaily clad crowd in summer dresses and shirt-sleeves gathered early on the warm summer evening. Scattered dozens were on hand by 6 p.m. By 7, the amphitheater was filling for the 7:30 opening. Delegations were said to have arrived from 104 Southland churches as far distant as San Diego and San Bernardino.

While the 5,000-member choir, "the largest choir we've ever had," rehearsed on the north side of the bowl, under guidance of Cliff Burrows, musical director, the thousands filtered in as the hot day turned to a cool dusk.

Batteries of floodlights were focused on the 38-by-32 ft. platform in about the center of the green field. On it were aides to the evangelist and visiting dignitaries as well as many others who had a part in the streamlined program.

Facing the crowd, the scoreboard proclaimed in lights a message from the Bible:

"Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life,' from John xiv, VI.

Dr. Graham's opening mes-

sage, the first of 21 he will deliver during the crusade, was centered on this doctrine as is his preaching ministry in general.

Ushers of all races distributed Billy Graham's song books and printed programs. As in most revival meetings, hymns and gospel singing played a big part. George Beverly Shea was soloist.

Both Shea and Burrows have been with the evangelist since his early days when he sometimes had trouble filling the tents the campaigns were conducted in.

## Started in 1949

His remarkable ministry got its first real impetus at Los Angeles in 1949, when a crusade he launched at Washington Blvd. and Hill St. caught on and was reported across the nation. He has not appeared in a local crusade here since 1952.

"These meetings have a habit of growing," he told the crowd in preliminary remarks. "We hope this will be true of this one."

In a prayer, the Rev. Howard O. Jones, a Negro missionary evangelist associated with the Graham team, said he hoped that the Coliseum would be "turned into a house of God, a divine sanctuary" and that this would be a "mighty revival."

As he spoke, and as other speakers took the stand, relays of "interpreters," in sign language converted the spoken word into symbols for the benefit of a section of deaf worshippers.

Bringing greetings were John Gibson Jr. from the City Council, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, and Mrs.

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# GRAHAM CRUSADE

Continued from Second Page a step closer to God during the next month."

Edith Seros, representing the state administration.

Dr. Graham said this meeting would be televised, carried by 200 stations across the nation, and that more people would see it than any other religious service. The cost, he said, would be \$125,000.

In his sermon Dr. Graham told the crowd that "no city influences the nation more than Los Angeles does.

"If Los Angeles would lead the way in a spiritual awakening, the whole nation would be affected. Therefore Los Angeles has a peculiar responsibility.

"There are thousands of persons in Los Angeles County who are trying to escape from the responsibilities of life through alcohol, sex, amusements and materialism.

## Message for 'Misfits'

"In this city there are thousands of misfits who have been uprooted from their homes in the east, and they are 'lost' from God, the church and morality."

He based his message on Jeremiah, an ancient prophet who appeared when his country was faced with calamity as is, the speaker suggested, America today.

"The racial crisis in America is getting worse," he said. "Our debts are getting bigger. In foreign affairs we are facing the awesome and growing power of Communist China."

He said, in the words of the prophet, "Turn to God before it is too late."

Jeremiah, he said, called the people back to the ancient laws and frontiers. The sins of his day are parallel to those of our day, he added.

"Yet America, he said, has had spiritual awakening in the past and he said he hoped "this crusade will be used to help lead the nation

Dr. Graham said we have "lost obedience to the Ten Commandments."

He noted a trend "to take God and moral law out of our schools," and said, "Separation of state and church was never meant to separate school children from God.

"This diabolical scheme," he added, "is bearing its fruit in the deluge of juvenile delinquency overwhelming our nation."

Lack of moral convictions and lack of God in their hearts have led young people and the nation into "an abnormal obsession with sex which could eventually destroy the country."

## 'Concept of God Lost'

He said the nation has "lost the true concept of God."

We have also lost "the deeper realization of the need for a personal encounter with Jesus Christ," he said, and this realization "we must recover."

He ended his message with his customary call to those who wish to dedicate their lives to Christ to come forward.

More than 2,000 filed down from the many Coliseum aisles and all but filled the green field before the platform.